

NEWS

WEEK OF CHAMPIONS: Athletes set to promote positive attitude to youth

LANCE CPL.
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STAFF WRITER

For one week, Lowcountry area youth will have the chance to learn the ins-and-outs of golf, soccer, football and baseball from professional athletes who will participate in the Week of Champions.

Gary Wetherington, the Week of Champions director, founded the event 26 years ago in order to promote professional athletes as positive role models for Lowcountry youth.

Wetherington hopes to positively affect the youth, by holding banquets, sports clinics and having the athletes speak on their faith and how it has impacted their lives.

“The purpose of the Week of Champions is to present professional athletes as positive role models for our kids,” said Wetherington. “They see all of the negative stuff that is on the television, and well, we want to present our young people

with athletes that are positive role models.”

Prior to the clinics and banquets, Derrick Moore, a former running back for the Detroit Lions and Carolina Panthers, along with Derwin Gray, a former cornerback for the Carolina Panthers, will lend their services to the Religious Ministries Center and the Depot. The pair will speak to recruits in attendance of the services at the Recruit Chapel Sunday.

“The athletes are going to give them their life story and how faith impacted their careers,” said Capt. Ralph Gibson, Assistant Chief of Staff for Religious Ministries. “We are trying to tie together our faith and our careers so that people see them as one.”

Speaking out against drugs and alcohol use, the speakers will promote a sense of positivity in the lives of the recruits and all of the youth involved with the program.

“They are Christian athletes, and they will share their Christian testimony,” said Wetherington, who is also a Lowcountry minister. “They will not shove Christianity down their throat, but they will share their life story with them. They will also encourage them to stay healthy physically, mentally and spiritually. They will show them what it is to be a good citizen, and they will teach them how to be champions for life.”

While Wetherington realizes that not every child is going to be a professional athlete, he hopes that they will learn to do everything that they can, to be the very best that they can be.

“It started off with three pro athletes and 40 kids,” said Wetherington. “This year we are going to have 46 athletes and a combined turnout of 1,400 kids.”

The Week of Champions will kick off with a sports banquet that is open to the public at a cost of \$25 each Thursday, at The King’s Wharf, Hilton

Week of Champions

- The Football clinic will be held Monday – Tuesday 9 a.m. – noon, for ages 8 and up at the Basil Green Recreational Complex.
- The Soccer clinic will be held Monday – Tuesday 9 a.m. – noon, for ages 8 and up at the Basil Green Recreational Complex.
- The Baseball clinic will be held Wednesday – Thursday 9 a.m. – noon, for ages 8 and up at the Basil Green Recreational Complex. Please bring your own glove.
- The Golf clinic will be held Thursday for ages 10 and up, 9 a.m. – noon, at the Dataw Island Golf Club.

Head. Among other well known athletes, the featured guest speaker of the banquet will be Chan Gailey, head football coach at Georgia Tech.

Along with the Hilton Head banquet, there will be several area sports clinics held across the Lowcountry with four held in the Beaufort Area.

“It’s the right saturation for the whole community,” said Greg Brezina, a former National Football League linebacker. “There’s no camp like this one with the quality of personnel we have. It works so well — players can come here and have a vacation with their families and at the same time do the community a service.”

For more information, contact Gary Wetherington at 757-2150.

Workin’ at the car wash ...



Lance Cpl. Brian Kester
Lieutenant Rick Bradley, Operations and Training chaplain, washes a car during the Religious Ministries Center Unit Morale Fund fundraiser at the Depot Commissary Wednesday. The RMC staff washed cars and sold hotdogs, sodas and homemade baked goods to raise funds. The proceeds went into a fund that boosts the morale of sick or injured service members or their families.

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